

# **Updating Newtown's Plan of Conservation and Development**

## **PUBLIC PLANNING WORKSHOP**

**March 8, 2003**

### **WORKSHOP TOPIC #4**

#### **Housing: What Should Be Newtown's Housing Goals For The Next 10 years?**

##### **Introduction**

The type, condition and cost of housing are important to the quality of life in Newtown. Ninety-two percent of Newtown's housing is owner occupied. During the past 20 years, 14,000 acres of Newtown's landscape was subdivided, producing 3,927 single family dwellings and 110 multi-family dwellings. Newtown lacks a meaningful supply of housing to serve a broad spectrum of ages and incomes. The median age of Newtown's population has increased from 31.4 years of age in 1970 to 37.5 years in 2000; the average size of Newtown's households has decreased from 3.5 persons per household in 1970 to 2.9 persons per household in 2000 and the average size of a new home in Newtown continues to increase.

The following summarizes the Issues, Goals and Strategies that have been discussed for this topic:

### **HOUSING**

#### **ISSUE #1: Housing Choices**

1. Newtown lacks a meaningful supply of multi-family rental housing for a broad spectrum of ages and incomes. Many who work in Newtown do not have the opportunity to live in the community in which they work. Because of the lack of affordable rental housing, some Newtown residents will not have the opportunity to continue to stay in Town, as their personal circumstances, incomes and housing needs change over time.

**Goal: *Strive for a more balanced supply of housing types that will accommodate the housing needs of Newtown residents and those working in Newtown.***

#### **Strategies:**

1. Create municipal regulations that will encourage the creation of multi-family rental housing at densities comparable to those currently allowed for congregate housing, where municipal infrastructure and soil conditions will permit, and include an affordable housing requirement;
2. Encourage the Borough to permit the development of residential uses over ground floor retail businesses in the village district, as was recommended in the 1993 POD;

3. If Newtown desires to pursue a goal of developing a more diversified housing stock, consider an integrated planning and community design strategy that reinforces existing built-up mixed-use areas of Town and creates new nodes of mixed-use development along Routes 6 and 25 that incorporate the historical pedestrian friendly development patterns traditional to New England communities.

**ISSUE #2: Housing Development, Open Space Preservation, Community Character**

1. The development of housing within Newtown directly affects open space and community character issues. The development of single family detached housing in Newtown consumes open land at the rate of 4.5 acres per dwelling unit.

**Goal:**    *Residential development should enhance Newtown's present community character.*

**Strategies:**

1. Create land use regulations that would encourage the use of "conservation" and "open space" subdivision design standards, without affecting the existing permitted density of development. The design of conservation and open space subdivisions should identify and attempt to conserve areas that contribute to the preservation of natural resources and attractive visual qualities;
2. Residential development fronting on rural roads should be sited with a visual buffer from the public realm- the road and right of way.